CIA Cuts Aid to Private Groups

Announcement Is Made After Meeting on Hill

Russell Indicates Move by Helms May Affect Many

The director of the Central Intelligence Agency told a Senate watchdog committee today that the agency will withdraw its financial support from a number of non-government activities.

CIA chief Richard Helms met with the 12-member subcom-

mittee behind closed doors. The substance of his testimony was disclosed by Chairman Richard B. Russell, D-Ga., who strongly defended the CIA in talks with reporters.

"I prefer not to go into a detailed list of all the organizations that are involved," Russell told newsmen after the three-hour session with Helms.

Helms himself walked briskly from the meeting, and brushed aside questions.

Russell said the furor caused by CIA's involvement with the National Student Association and other non-government groups has "greatly damaged its effectiveness." He described as "just a lot of hogwash" the idea that the CIA involvement has damaged academic freedom.

"It Might Be Well"

Russell first gave his own opinion that, in view of the recent publicity, "it might be well for the CIA to sever financial connections with a great number of organizations."

Asked whether Helms has stated that CIA support would be withdrawn, Russell first said, "yes." But then said he would rather not quote Helms.

"In my opinion, support for some of these agencies will be withdrawn, because it would be a waste to continue," Russell said.

The chairman declined to say what specific financial grants would be curtailed, saying: "I prefer not to go into a detailed list of all of the organizations that are involved."

Kennedy Backs CIA

Prior to this, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy said it was unfair to make the CIA "take the rap" for subsidizing private groups.

The former attorney general, brother of the late President, voiced sympathy for the CIA, buffeted in a wave of protest reaction to the disclosure that it had channeled money through various foundations to student and other organizations with international activities.

With a rueful grin about "getting into another controversy," the senator said, in an interview:

"These basic decisions were not made unilaterally by the CIA but by the executive branch —in the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations. All relevant government agencies are contacted for their approval. That includes the White House.

"If the policy was wrong, it was not the product of the CIA but of each administration."

"We must not forget that we are not dealing with a dream world, but with a very tough adversary," he said.

"I think it is unfair that the CIA should take the rap on this. Any of these decisions made by CIA had to have been approved by others."

Kennedy called the CIA an "invaluable organization" and said it has its own functions to protect the security of the country. It has some of

servants in the government."

He said he did not wish to discuss specific cases of CIA involvement and had no ready answer as to how financial support of private international activities helpful to the nation should best be handled.

While Kennedy voiced sympathy for the CIA, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey said he was "not at all happy" with the CIA's covert support of the National Student Association and other groups.

Humphrey told students at Stanford University that the CIA's infiltration into the collegiate group was "one of the saddest times our government has had in terms of public policy."

"I'm not all happy about what the CIA is doing," Humphrey said. "I regret that the CIA was involved in this. I think we ought to keep our democratic institutions free of government coercion."

He said the CIA needs "closer supervision" and should be "confined to its intelligence-gathering activities."

Humphrey's comment followed similar criticism in a statement issued by John W. Gardner, secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, who is a member of a panel President Johnson appointed last week to review CIA activities such as the NSA program.

Gardner said it was "a mistake for the CIA ever to entangle itself in covert activities close to the field of education or scholarship or the university."

But he stressed that he felt the error should not weigh against recognizing the nation's need for an intelligence-gathering agency.

Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy, D-Minn., today proposed an investigation of the CIA by a select Senate committee of seven members.

McCarthy, a frequent critic of the CIA, introduced a resolution in the Senate to authorize the inquiry. The committee would report its findings not later than next Jan. 1.

The panel, under the McCarthy resolution, would make a "full investigation of CIA activities and particularly "their effect on the integrity of domestic, private and public institutions and organizations and on American foreign policy."

McCarthy said this would include the CIA's use of academic institutions, student groups, foundations, trades unions, and other organizations.

Under the resolution, the committee also would be authorized to investigate the subsidizing of any organizations that influence public opinion, and the subsidization of publications, radio broadcasts and other information.